

THE "LAR"—HOUSEHOLD GODS.

PERHAPS some of your numerous readers may be able to explain the origin of the word "LAR." I have never found it in any dictionary. My parents used the word in reference to the lar of the chimney, though I have never known it understood by others. The other day a friend with whom I was conversing used the same word for the chimney shelf. Now, I have thought it may have reference to the *Lares* or household gods of the ancients, a similar spot having been employed for their reception (or exhibition rather). Certainly it is till the present day the one generally preferred for the placing of little figures, or objects of curiosity and ornament.

THOS. S. BOYS.

. The connection is undeniable: *Lar* (pl. *Lares*), is Latin for the "fireside," as well as for a household god. It is even translated "one's home." *Ab ipso lare*, to begin at home, was a common proverb. Our "household gods" and the social fire-side are happily still connected.—En.

NOTES OF IRISH WORKS.

A new church has been erected at Doe, county Donegal, according to the designs of the architect to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. The interior woodwork, sittings, &c. are not yet finished.

A new terminus is being erected at Albert's Quay, Cork, by the Cork and Bandon Railway Company: the foundation-stone has been laid.

Active arrangements are being made for the erection of a suitable building for the conventual purposes of the Sisters of Mercy, Belfast. A portion of the grounds attached to the Catholic seminary on the Antrim road has been purchased for the purpose.

A model farm is proposed to be established at Belfast, according to the designs of the architect to the Commissioners of National Education.

The Building Committee of Freemasons' Female Orphan School are about building a school-house at the Grand Canal Dublin, according to the designs of Mr. George Papworth, architect. Tenders are being received.

The works on the Londonderry and Enniskillen railway are nearly completed as far as Newtownstewart, and the line will shortly be opened for traffic. A deep cutting, about two miles beyond Strabane, occasioned much delay. Negotiations for land between Omagh and Londonderry are being made, and tenders from several contractors have been received.

A new hall, for the purposes of a mechanics' institute, is projected at Newan.

The Town Hall Committee of Cork have not yet finally decided on the selection of a plan for their new building. We hope since such a number of designs (forty-two) have been furnished from several parts of the United Kingdom, that local interest will not supersede superior merit.

Two parochial churches are in progress of erection at Wexford.

The contract for the line of railway from Bray to Wicklow has been taken by Mr. Dargan.

Alterations and additions are about being made to the lunatic asylum at Belfast, by the Commissioners of Public Works, according to the drawings furnished by Mr. Charles Lanyon, the county surveyor.

The "Conciliation Hall," at Dublin, is being converted into an extensive corn store, under the direction of Messrs. Louch and Sons, architects.

The Munster Exhibition of Arts and Manufactures is to open at Cork on the 17th of June: Sir Robert Kane, president of the Queen's College, and Sir Thomas Deane, architect, high sheriff of Cork, have had an interview with the Lord Lieutenant on the subject, and received his full sanction.

The committee for the erection of a new Presbyterian college at Belfast, advertised some time since for plans of the proposed building. Twenty designs were furnished, although no premium was offered. At a meeting lately held, those by Mr. Charles Lanyon, county surveyor, were accepted. The design is in the style which prevailed in the time of

Inigo Jones. The entire frontage is 135 feet, and the centre building, in which is a tetrastyle Doric portico, with columns 30 feet high, has an altitude 55 feet; that of the wings at the extremities is 45 feet. It will be executed in cut stone. Arrangements for the immediate reception of tenders are being made. The probable cost will be 2,500l.

THE SOCIETY OF COLLEGE YOUTHS.

PERCEIVING in THE BUILDER of the 31st ult. some remarks on the "College Youths," I am induced to send you a few particulars of that body.

The Society of College Youths was established in 1637 by Lord Brereton, Sir Cliff Clifton, &c. and derives its name from the College of St. Spirit and Mary, founded by Sir Richard Whittington, on College-hill, Upper Thames-street, which was burnt down in the Fire of London: its church had six bells, and from ringing these the name of "College Youths" was assumed. Among the notables who have been elected members are the Hon. Robert Cecil (Marquis of Salisbury), Sirs John Bolles and Watkin W. Wynne, baronets; Sirs Francis Wubins, Martin Lomly, Richard Everard, Henry Tulce, aldermen, Richard Atkins, Henry Chauncey, Thomas Samnell, Gilbert Dolbin, William Culpeper, John Tash, alderman, Henry Hicks, and Watkin Lewis, knights. At the present time there are 193 members living; the admission fee is 3s.; a register is kept of every member's name, and all peals of 5,000 changes and upwards. The members ring at St. Mary-le-Bow; St. Saviour's, Southwark; St. Magnus, London-bridge; and St. James's, Bermondsey. They have branches at Woolwich, Dorking, and Barnsley, Yorkshire, which regularly correspond with the parent society. Meetings for practice are held every Tuesday at one of the above churches, also for hand-bell practice. Persons desirous of becoming members must be nominated a fortnight previously, to afford time for inquiries to be made respecting character, &c. Trusting the time is not far distant when all parish authorities will take more interest in bellfries and ringers,—I am, &c. W. COOPER, Hon. Sec. to the Society.

RAILING IN BELGIUM.

YOUR correspondent of last week ("Charles Hill"), on "railing at home and abroad," has not stated the advantages which may be put against the discomfort of foreign railways; and I wish to add a few remarks on those of Belgium from my own experience. The weighing and paying for luggage affords the greatest possible security, for no one can take it away without producing the duplicate of the ticket posted on each package to the officer in charge of it. The payment exacted is so trifling, that an ordinary traveller's portmanteau does not cost more than a shilling for a hundred miles, and as for the delay occasioned by weighing it in time, I have sometimes sent mine a day before, and always found it safe at the station, where I addressed it. This is a great convenience to artists and architects who like to ramble about. But if you lose a few minutes by having your luggage weighed, it is fully compensated by the mode of gathering the tickets previous to arrival, which is performed while the carriages are running, the guard passing from one vehicle to another by a hand-rail placed outside every carriage. Most persons become a little impatient in England by the detention to gather the tickets. At the Malines station, the times of departure of the trains and the fares for every class are legibly painted. On the platform a man is stationed near an inscription, as follows:—"Station de l'Employé pour donner Information des Convois;" and this man is always at his post, and fulfils his duty with great civility. At Brussels there is a female especially appointed to attend to ladies in the waiting-room, which is an apartment of elegant construction, fitted with luxurious sofas throughout. On the platform of this station, in the large panellings of the walls, the maps of the railroads of England, Belgium, France, and Germany are separately painted, besides

information of the costs and duration of the journeys, from Brussels to London, Paris, Marseilles, Bordeaux, Berlin, Vienna, Trieste, &c. The above may even afford useful hints for English railways.—H. M.

CHARCOAL FOR DRAINING.
FERTILISING, &c.

OF the very many purposes to which charcoal is now applied, the drainage of land forms one worthy of notice, in being a cheap and effectual operation: it will in all probability ultimately come into more general use. Upon farms where brushwood, gorse, and thinnings of young plantations are easily obtained, this forms an excellent material to be so employed, and when charred, is porous, light, and hardly susceptible of decay. The brushwood, &c., being made up into faggots of a suitable size, previous to charring, may be secured with a band of wire at either end, and then laid into the drain, which so constructed is not easily choked, for as the material maintains the position in which it is placed, the superincumbent earth cannot fall in by the decay of any support: it is also a preventive to moles, which is a very important object gained.

In the operation there is no absolute necessity to preserve the faggots entire; for it is evident that a heap of sprays of charcoal, broken in pieces from 2 to 3 inches long, would form a more porous material than any equal bulk of stones.

Peat charcoal is likewise found to be a valuable material for filling in drains, and for constructing hollow ones, as it constitutes a light substance when charred in a close oven, also for the purposes of manure or disinfecting agent, its absorbing and retaining powers being great. This charcoal is forwarded in great quantities to London from Ireland; and from the abundance and consequent cheapness of the raw material, from the facility and inexpensive process of its manufacture, from the lightness which renders it easily portable, and from the small quantity necessary to produce a great amount of benefit, peat charcoal is calculated to become a great boon, both as to comfort and health; nor does the fact of its not being recently prepared militate against its usefulness, as however long it may be exposed to the air, and thereby rendered in some degree inert, all its valuable properties are at once restored merely by heating it in a retort, such as is used in the distillation of coal gas. The valuable properties of charred peat as an agent for destroying offensive odours arising from sewers and cesspools you have already alluded to.

G. J. R.

A DIP INTO OUR COMMON-PLACE BOOK.

Ready Method for approximately ascertaining relative Areas.—Mr. Jardine and Sir Geo. Stewart Sinclair ascertained the approximate relative superficies of Scotland, its counties, and the land and water in each, by weighing the parts as cut out with a sharp-pointed knife, from a copy of Arrowsmith's maps, carefully selected of paper of nearly uniform thickness. A portion of each sheet, equal to 5,000 English square miles, measured from the scale of the maps, was carefully weighed: the balance used was sensible to $\frac{1}{10}$ of a grain, when loaded with 2 lb. in each scale. The method employed seems to have been first made use of by Dr. Long, of Cambridge, in 1742, to ascertain the proportion of the land to the water on the surface of the earth.

Gilding.—It has been observed in gilt signs, while the letters generally were so much tarnished by the weather and other causes, as to render it difficult to tell whether they were ever gilded, that where a nail had been driven in, rain—having first corroded it—had then run down, impregnated with the ore, upon the gilt letters, which remained so brilliant that the gold appeared to be newly laid on. From this circumstance, the question suggests itself,—might not corroded iron, or rust of iron, be employed in some way or other in gilding on wood, so as to preserve the brilliancy of the gold for ages?